



The Stereo Times
The Complete Audiophile Magazine




QUEST FOR SOUND



DISCOVER MUSIC AGAIN



Neko Audio

HOME ARCHIVES MostWanted RECORD REVIEWS AD INDEX CONTACT SHOW REPORTS



CES and T.H.E. Show 2008 Show Report



I noticed several trends at CES and T.H.E. Show this year. I keep hearing claims that high-end audio is dead. I submit that it is just changing faces. Several well-known companies with legacy digital transports and players are offering iPod-docking stations. Other companies (too numerous for me to report on) are offering creative ways (USB DACs etc.) to optimize the transfer of music from a computer to an audiophile system. This, in recognition of the power of the internet and digital storage. Increasing amounts of music in various resolutions are being made available on the internet. More and more music is being downloaded and many users are addicted to having large libraries of music available at their fingertips. Many audiophiles are "guilty" of owning an iPod (or similar

device) for the convenience factor. Now they don't have to hide it when company comes.

I also keep reading that the younger generation is hopelessly lost in a swamp of heavily compressed music with loudness pushed too far toward the red line. I further submit for your consideration that just as I was saved from the transistor radio, so too will many of the younger generation find salvation. I choose to be optimistic and believe the "more generation" will, at some point, plug their iPods into one of the emerging crop of high-quality docking stations and want more. They will not abandon convenience but they will begin to embrace the visceral thrill of better listening just as many of us started down this slippery slope with our first Garrard or Dual and KLH or Advent. Yes, I started with a transistor radio but momma look at me now!

My final observation on why high-end audio is not dead comes in the form of a salute to the entrepreneurial and creative spirit I witnessed. Established companies that are evolving as well as new companies laying it all on the line for their passion give me faith that there are exciting things to come.

Confession, I am not a "techie". I do not own an iPod. I did however touch one at CES and that is the most contact I have had. I don't even own a cell phone. I am not a technology proponent. I am merely an observer. And I observe that the industry is always changing (sometimes faster than other times) and there are always critics of that change. The trick is to listen to the music, not the noise.



I now step down from my soapbox to present picture proof of my postulations along with some other goodies from CES and T.H.E. Show 2008.

Von Gaylord Audio (T.H.E. Show)



Ray Leung celebrates Von Gaylord Audio's (formerly Legend Audio Design) 15th anniversary as he stands by the vG One and vG One Plus speakers (\$13,800/set) powered by Uni liquid cooled mono blocks with separate power supplies (\$59,000/set). And celebrate he should. The Von Gaylord room is my choice for best room at either venue.

Von Gaylord Audio produces everything in the system (Uni preamplifier \$12,500, Uni DAC \$10,000, Chinchilla cables) except the CD transport. The synergies are obvious in a system that has exquisite detail throughout all octaves and is as musical as any I have ever heard. Vocals are spellbinding. Bass is powerful yet well defined and in correct proportion. Dynamics are fast and controlled. The Von Gaylord system is both seductive and has slam, like a geisha/samurai. I listened for almost an hour and could find no faults or imbalance. I would have loaded everything up and brought it home if I could. This is the first system that has actually made me seriously regret I could not afford it. The best I can do is to try some power cords and cables. Any system that sounds that engaging has to have comparable wire.

Wadia Digital, Inc. (CES)

Nothing you have heard or seen prepares you for the Chorus by NSMT



Audio Consulting
"Emotion in Sound"

R-evolution
Minima

